ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[097]   A system for reliably retrieving information which may be in any one of several possible formats and for subsequent display of that information in any one of several possible formats. User-defined agents are used to retrieve target data based on a heuristic algorithm and to store the target data in a canonical form, ready for re-publication in whatever form best suits a particular application. The system is particularly well suited to obtaining information over the internet for display on a desktop system, but it is also well suited for applications having only limited display or computational capabilities.